

To: Connecticut General Assembly Housing Committee

From: Thomas Broderick, Trumbull

Re: H.B. 5326 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING APPEALS PROCESS AND REMOVING THE MUNICIPAL OPT-OUT DEADLINE FOR ACCESSORY APARTMENTS and H.B. 6777 – AN ACT CONCERNING PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENTS FOR CERTAIN SENIOR-OWNED DEED-RESTRICTED PROPERTIES

Date: February 25 2023

To Housing Committee Chairs Sen. Marilyn Moore, Rep. Luxenberg, and Ranking and Distinguished Members,

I am writing to oppose both H.B. 5326 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING APPEALS PROCESS AND REMOVING THE MUNICIPAL OPT-OUT DEADLINE FOR ACCESSORY APARTMENTS and H.B. 6777 – AN ACT CONCERNING PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENTS FOR CERTAIN SENIOR-OWNED DEED-RESTRICTED PROPERTIES.

Connecticut has a housing crisis for both renters and potential home buyers. The facts are stark, especially for the state's working class families:

- Connecticut had the lowest rental vacancy rate in the country in the summer of 2022, with only 2.1% of rental units vacant, and in the Bridgeport metro it was only 1.4%
- Rents have soared over the last several years, increasing by an average of over 20%
- The state needs an estimated 135,000 units of affordable housing over the next 10 years
- A family has to work 79 hours a week at minimum wage to afford the average two-bedroom apartment.

Let's be clear—neither of these bills would do anything to address the state's need for affordable housing; indeed, they would produce less than the already-insufficient amount that's being built. Allowing towns to count market-rate housing in place of deed-restricted, truly affordable homes would leave less place for our working families to call home and build thriving, stable lives.

In addition to opposing these two bills, I want to use this testimony to affirmatively support 8-30g and remind the committee of the over 7,500 affordable units created because of this law. Although it's often forgotten, the state's Zoning Enabling Act—the legal foundation for so-called “local control”—requires municipalities to “promote housing choice and economic diversity in housing, including housing for both low- and moderate-income households.” Too many towns are ignoring this requirement, and Section 8-30g is one of only mechanisms to make affordable housing a reality.

8-30g is not the only solution to Connecticut's housing crisis, but it is an important part. We can see nearby affordable homes as a threat, or we can envision the young family we'll be inviting to backyard barbecues or the

grandparents that can age-in-place near their family. I live in Trumbull and teach in Ridgefield, and I see every day how growing up in an affluent, opportunity-rich community benefits my neighbors and students, and I want the same thing for every child and family in the state. We need to expand our housing supply while making provisions for low-income households.

I urge this committee to reject such a transparent attempt to limit the American Dream, reduce opportunity, and prevent the construction of affordable housing. Please oppose both H.B. 5326 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING APPEALS PROCESS AND REMOVING THE MUNICIPAL OPT-OUT DEADLINE FOR ACCESSORY APARTMENT and H.B. 6777 – AN ACT CONCERNING PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENTS FOR CERTAIN SENIOR-OWNED DEED-RESTRICTED PROPERTIES.

A better future really is possible, but we need your leadership and vision to make it happen.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Broderick

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